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BOLIVIA: Coup Strategy

A coup led by General Garcia Meza could take place sometime before the general election on 29 June. Attempting to avoid the mistakes that scuttled the coup led by Colonel Natusch last November, plotters plan to detain leading political opponents during the first hours to prevent organized resistance. In addition, they are buying off middle-level labor union and peasant confederation officials to preclude a general strike. To ensure the unity of the armed forces, the military high command has been changed, and hesitant officers are being courted. Anticipating US opposition to a coup--with its attendant loss of vital financial aid--plotters are soliciting support from Brazil and Argentina; official statements from those countries deny any complicity.

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31 May 1980